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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2001

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Guillermo E. **Kendall** (Argentina)

II. Calendar of conferences and meetings

B. Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

4. Utilization of the United Nations conference centres in Bangkok and Addis Ababa

Introduction and overview

1. At its 439th meeting, on 28 August 2001, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the United Nations conference centres in Bangkok and Addis Ababa (A/56/293), which was introduced by a representative of the Secretariat.

2. The Committee learned that greater utilization of the two conference centres continued to be constrained by uncertainty about the appropriate use of the facilities, particularly as venues for private sector and commercial events; limited opportunities for rerouting meetings from the calendar of conferences; inadequate staffing structures for management of the centres; lack of funds for marketing and promotional activities; and regional instability. In the case of Bangkok, the conversion of a conference room to more flexible seating would make marketing easier.

3. Notwithstanding those constraints, efforts had been made to staff and manage the centres better and to attract more users, and utilization statistics over the two-year period from 1998 to 2000 had shown steady improvement.

4. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services had visited the centres and conducted in-depth discussions with their

management on the coordination of conference services at the various duty stations and better utilization of their facilities.

Discussion

5. The view was expressed that the Secretariat's efforts to work with the regional commissions in Addis Ababa and Bangkok constituted an encouraging example of the value of sharing experience and expertise.

6. It was clarified that the conversion of the conference room in Bangkok mentioned in paragraph 2 above was not foreseen during the next biennium.

7. Under the agenda item entitled "Improved utilization of conference servicing resources and facilities", it was proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it study the possibility of strengthening the oversight and supervisory functions of the Committee on Conferences in order to increase the effectiveness of its work.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee noted with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General and the encouraging trend in the utilization of conference facilities at the two regional centres.

9. The Committee encouraged the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Africa to continue their efforts to further improve the utilization of their conference centres and to keep the Committee informed of developments.

10. The Committee encouraged the sharing of experience and expertise between conference services managers of the Secretariat and those of the regional commissions.

Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee welcomed the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/299) and endorsed the preliminary observations contained therein.

5. The Committee looked forward to obtaining a comprehensive review of the availability of such documentation after the biennial cycle of conferences and meetings had ended and additional replies had been received from the bodies concerned.